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ABSTRACT

A review of the literature supports the notion that adolescent literature offers vast opportunities for application to educational settings. Efforts to legitimize the genre by making it more realistic have succeeded in winning approval from professional organizations, educators, and the general public. With its only recently improved status, popular adolescent novels have just begun to surface as valuable tools for assisting adolescents in their progression toward adulthood. While the creative application of adolescent novels in educational settings depends, to a large degree, upon the professional, the genre's thematic and topical concerns provide irrefutable and invaluable assistance to the adolescent even without educational intervention. Of particular importance are the following contributions of the genre to the area of adolescent psychology and to the adolescent: (1) providing a practical and interesting way of promoting the development of critical thinking skills involving problem-solving and coping strategies; (2) helping the adolescent recognize, understand, and accept himself or herself and others; (3) offering insights that lead to values clarification and encouraging experimentation rather than foreclosure; (4) focusing on rites of passage and initiatory stress factors facing adolescents in Western culture; and (5) helping the adolescent to emancipate himself or herself gradually from unilateral parental control and to accept responsibilities. (HOD)

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Applications of Popular Adolescent Literature to Adolescent Development and to Adolescent Psychology

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Paper presented at

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Applications of Popular Adolescent Literature to Adolescent Development and to Adolescent Psychology

An examination of the contributions of popular American novels of adolescence to the area of adolescent psychology requires the introduction and definition of various terms relevant to both adolescent literature and adolescent psychology. An attempt to introduce the literary and psychological concepts involved in such an examination, however, inadvertently raises questions and presents difficulties that make the task of analysis much more difficult. Nevertheless, the terminology must be introduced, the controversy must be explored, and the findings must be analyzed to effectively consider the genre's contributions to the area of adolescent psychology.

Trying to provide a concise definition of this category of American literature poses the first major difficulty. Burton (1951), one of the first to elaborate on the problem, noted that the terms "literature for adolescents" and "adolescent literature," often used synonymously, represent different concepts. The term "novels for adolescents" suggests admirable, enduring artistic merit; "adolescent fiction," while meeting some of the standards of genuine fiction, nevertheless, implies less maturity in art form.

Similarly, Magaliff (1964) stated that the term adolescent literature represented a broad body of writing focusing on important, meaningful, and significant adolescent concerns. Narrowing the term further, the author suggested that the term junior novels more appropriately describes those works aimed primarily at analyzing and resolving adolescent crises. The determining factor, according to this definition, is the author's purpose.

Applying the term literature for adolescents in a more general way, Fuller (1980) indicated that publishers have traditionally appealed to the young, white, middle-class, native American. With this marketing strategy, publishers have promoted magazines, classic works, and novels of series. Literature for adolescents, Fuller (1980) suggested, refers to works aimed at or popular with adolescents.

Hoping to clarify the definition somewhat, Nilsen (1981) studied the rating, ranking, and labeling of adolescent literature. Identifying four groups of related terminology including adolescent literature, junior or teen novels, juvenile fiction, land young adult literature, the author listed the titles of twenty books and placed each under one of the four categories. Alphabetized and uncategorized book lists were then sent to 100 librarians, publishers, English teachers, and reading teachers who were asked to categorize the novels.

Results indicated vast differences in classification of the novels; apparent confusion over the exact meaning of each category existed among the participants. Most participants, however, stressed that the term adolescent literature should be replaced with the more current young adult literature.

The findings of the Nilsen study hinted at another concern of professionals about adolescent literature, its overall literary quality and value. Asserting that many traditionalists view literature aimed at adolescents as inferior, Donelson and Hayes (1978) reported that professional critics have fostered an apparent negative view of adolescent literature by referring to it as juvenile, third-rate, sentimental, and poorly written. The typical view has deemed the genre important only for remedial class instruction.

Witham, in the preface of The Adolescent in the American Novel, 1920-1960, noted that the work omitted "novels which seem to have been written primarily for sensational appeal or for interest to juvenile readers" (Witham, 1964, p. 3), but included selected novels of special merit from the group. The comment, while expressing an inherent skepticism toward novels for adolescents, nevertheless recognized the possible value of some of these works outside the remedial classroom.

Bonnici (1981) addressed the concern about teenage literature and classroom instruction and suggested that the books of the genre do assist in remedial instruction. They also offer, however, pleasurable entertainment for many adolescents; thematic and cultural concerns not dealt with in classic adolescent novels make the popular novels for adolescents appealing.

Nilsen (1981) discussed the various descriptors for adolescent literature, the basis for each descriptor, and the connotation of each. The study recognized the current term, young adult literature, as the most popular one from the study's participants, especially with librarians. English teachers, reflecting an academic orientation, felt most comfortable with the term adolescent literature; publishers promoted juvenile fiction, a term considered dated by the other groups.

The differences in terminology reflect quality as well as meaning. Typically, the term junior novel represented the more formularized approach of the series novels considered in the study. Literature about adolescents described classic novels not necessarily designed for adolescents but with an adolescent central character. Teachers of English, the study reported, subscribed to the latter term because of its basis in classic literature and its implication of quality (Nilsen, 1981).

The lack of acceptance of literature for adolescents among educators has, traditionally, prevented many adolescents from being exposed to the genre. Samuels (1981) noted that adolescent novels have more recently appeared as required reading for junior high rather than for senior high school classes. The official adoption in 1976 of the term literature for adolescents by the Adolescent Literature Assembly of the National Council of Teachers of English, now the Assembly on Literature for Adolescents -- National Council of Teachers of English, may be accountable for this change (Nilsen, 1981; Samuels, 1981). Additional recognition by the Modern Language Association also helped the genre achieve much needed notariety and respectability among professionals (Matthews, 1978).

Reluctance to recognize the genre's contributions and its literary merit still exists; the foundation for this reluctance

lies with the inevitable comparison with classic novels of adolescence. Lukens (1982) stated that classics like Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn offer universal appeal, complex plots, and insightful characterization. Imitations, however, have often only focused on single aspects of the classic novel; mischievousness in the works of Twain is an example.

Twain himself, however, in an attempt to define a classic, said "A classic is something that everybody wants to have read and nobody wants to read" (Carlsen, 1980, p. 147). His humorous, straightforward observation questions an absolute, unwavering commitment to all classic novels. This helped, undoubtedly, pave the way for popular fiction today.

With the acceptance of professional groups, literature for adolescents has experienced much growth and development. In an attempt to recognize the trends in literature for adolescents and to classify the various interest areas the novels encompass, Calabro (1980) provided the following categories: (a) realistic or problem novels describing adolescent problems and how to effectively deal with them, (b) humorous novels providing and showing amusing ways adolescents cope with reality, (c) mysteries where adolescent dilemmas focus on problem-solving abilities, (d) biographies and histories that are readable and educational, (e) sports novels for both sexes, (f) science fiction and fantasy books, (g) romances appropriate for the female adolescent, (h) books for minorities grounded in the cultural realities peculiar to their particular group, and (i) books of poetry, especially anthologies dealing with love.

Another attempt at classification of literature for the adolescent focused on general topics of interest rather than on novel type. The first classification, denoted "The Search," investigates a quest for values essential for normal personality development. "Problems of Social Order" highlights the next concern; social concerns dominate this category. Third, the "Bizarre, the Off-Beat, the Unusual in Human Experience" comprises the next category. The final topic of interest, "Transition," portrays the adolescent's progression toward adulthood (Edwards, 1970).

Carlsen (1970), discussing reading patterns of young adults, offered six types of novels for adolescents ranging in age from 12-20 years. For the 12-14 age group, novels of adventure were suggested; mysteries also figured prominently. Animal stories, the third type of adolescent novel mentioned, were suggested for both males and females. Sports stories were also mentioned as appealing to adolescent boys in the 12-14 age bracket. For middle adolescents ranging in age from 15-16, historical novels and real life adventures were suggested. Adolescents from 17-18 years were reported as having interests in four distinct categories including personal values, social injustice, psychological concerns, and maturational stories.

Purves (1981), however, warned against accepting these categories without unbiased consideration and hypothesized that because of age and sex role stereotyping, that many children may not have the opportunity to fully explore the offerings of

adolescent literature. Marketing procedures along with librarian and parental philosophies, have kept the stereotype alive.

Regardless of one's stance on the classic vs. popular literature issue and on the type of novel the adolescent may choose to read, Laroque (1974) stated that educators must encourage the adolescent to explore all kinds and categories of novels. To benefit from a work of art, the adolescent must be able to fully understand and appreciate the work. The adolescent's critical evaluation of a classical or popular novel, hen, is dependent upon his/her background, and the author, place, and time of the book.

Gentile and McMillan (1977) commented on student disinterest and indifference toward reading. Citing several factors that affect one's desire to read, the authors suggested that adolescents fraught with various personal concerns, unable to sit patiently, and demanding to be entertained, often find classroom reading selections with adult interests rather then their own, adolescents may fail to recognize the value of the selected material (Mason, 1980). Since teachers primarily select classic literary works for assigned reading, they and their students might benefit from reading experiences more appropriately addressing adolescent concerns (Mehl, 1973). Popular adolescent novels, for the most part, meet these criteria.

Following the preceding research, Gentile and McMillan (1979) focused on reading and self-awareness. Stating that the adolescent's concern for self-identity and his/her attempts at coping with the stresses of daily living make adolescence a period of great turmoil, the authors offered support for viewing adolescence as a period of great storm and stress. The physiological and the psychological stresses of youth, coupled with modern day life complexities, produce disillusionment and anxiety. By supplying appropriate reading materials, educators can assist in "expanding students' coping skills, decision making processes, and critical thinking capacities" (Gentile & McMillan, 1979, p. 630).

Similarly, Beyard-Tyler and Sullivan (1980), examining adolescent reading preferences for type of theme and sex of character, concluded that adolescents preferred literature where the main characters successfully resolved crises confronting them. With reference to the development of gender identity and sex role patterns, the authors noted that both male and female participants in the study showed a preference for male protagonists.

Bank (1969) reported that the literary hero for adolescents was the adolescent himself. Since the adolescent's egocentric nature and personal experiences heavily influence his/her perception of reality, adolescent literature offers great appeal. Providing a means of identifying with other adolescents resolving similar problems, the novel of adolescence supplies pleasure, challenge, and relevance.

Offering a similar but more detailed point of view, Carlsen (1979) identified psychological satisfactions as a primary concern for teenage readers and proposed three adolescent concerns paralleling the three phases of adolescence. In early

adolescence, a concern for the ego and status surfaces; literary heroes and heroines capable of surmounting tremendous obstacles are especially pleasing. During mid - adolescence, the teenager yearns for an assurance of normality and uses literary characters as a basis for comparison. Finally, in late adolescence, a pre-occupation with human dilemmas makes novels requiring much more critical thinking and reflection popular.

Describing the passing of the adolescent from childhood to adulthood in their own lives, teachers, as former adolescents, can provide much needed assistance to adolescents under their guidance and direction; providing exposure to adolescent literature with special emphasis on the theme of initiation will also encourage an understanding and appreciation of literature as an art form (Ramsey & Thompson, 1979). By offering the adolescent reading material useful in identifying and understanding his/her own stage of psychosocial development, the educator promotes self - clarification (Taubenheim, 1979).

The contributions of novels of adolescence toward self - awareness was discussed by McBroom (1981) and Morgan (1980) in separate but related articles. Recognizing the importance of the genre for the developing adolescent, the authors also stressed that more positive self - appraisals and improved relationships with others resulted after exposure to young adult literature dealing with initiation into adulthood.

Abrahamson (1983) surveyed instructors of courses on the topic of adolescent literature with a questionnaire involving materials, content, assignments, and evaluation. Results for the content segment of the questionnaire revealed a common emphasis on the topic of rites of passage or on the theme of initiation. Results also showed that 56% of those completing questionnaires organized course content according to genre; most frequently, instructors relied upon novels to consider the adolescent's initiation into adulthood.

Bachelder, Kelly, Kenny, and Small (1980) also explored the concept of adolescent initiation into adulthood in an attempt to locate the classic young adult novel. Stating that several literary classics dealing with adolescents focused on the theme of initiation, the authors reported these classics did not appeal to many teenagers, particularly those in early adolescence. Not until Blume's Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret surfaced in 1974 did novels of initiation, especially for the female, speak explicitly to the adolescent.

In 1967, when S. E. Hinton's The Outsiders appeared, aspects of what has been termed the "new realism" surfaced. New social realities influenced by "protest, drugs, violence, and family disruption" (Robin, 1987) began to figure prominently in the adolescent experience. Like the characters in the Hinton novel, the adolescent began to envision life in terms of crisis resolution.

But it was the appearance of the Blume novel and its subsequent popularity in adolescent circles that prompted an upsurge in literature for adolescents. The thrust of the novels following the Blume example delved more deeply into the world of

the adolescent and promised a more realistic portrayal of the plight of all adolescents.

Why the sudden appeal for realism in novels of adolescents? Pillar (1976) stated that the need for realistic fiction consistent with adolescent experience has increased, primarily, because of the secular trend. Earlier social, emotional, and physical maturity requires a more sophisticated treatment of adolescent experience.

Expressing a similar viewpoint, Donelson and Haley (1974) suggested that today's adolescents, moreso than their predecessors, exhibit a tendency to question and examine. The works of Zindel, the authors proposed, capture the spirit of the modern adolescent and, by so doing, provide a necessary quality of realism. Zindel's method involves the selection of an adolescent viewpoint and the inclusion of both fun and humor whenever possible. Ultimately, Donelson and Haley (1974) reported, Hinton succeeds because his realism restores faith in human nature and individual worth.

Isaacs (1979) reviewed the works of other contemporary researchers on adolescents and stressed that, in order to meet current standards of realism, novels of adolescence should address both intellectual and psychological needs. While desiring honesty in reading selections, adolescents also want upbeat, positive plots for motivational purposes. Faced with reading selections of this kind, adolescents appear motivated to read more often and to maintain hope for personal crisis resolution.

Describing the contrasts between earlier examples of adolescent novels in the 1960's and before with those of the 1970's, Muller (1974) first commented on the obvious shift in content from simple problems to controversial ones. An apparent pre - occupation with dress, hairstyle, and complexion yielded to more realistic concerns like pregnancy, drug abuse, handicaps, sex, and death.

Problem resolution within the novels of adolescence also reflected the change from the simple to the complex. Where the adolescent protagonist in most novels from the pre - 1970's era solved the challenges confronting them, those characters from the latter group did not necessarily do so. Novels from the more realistic group, like their predecessors, concluded with happy, optimistic, or pessimistic endings (Muller, 1974).

Similarly, realistic novels of adolescents reflect an apparent seriousness about adolescent problems not consistently present in popular literature before. Themes of change and continuity, along with the psychological factors involved in coping with transition, now dominate the genre (Bleich, 1980; Klein, 1981; Small, 1980).

What, then, constitutes the new realism? What are its special considerations or its criteria? Oliver (1978) responded to these questions in an article on both old and new realism in adolescent literature. The novel's time and setting, the author first noted, are consistent with the real world. Reflecting life itself, the realistic novel's plot is less structured than the traditional novel's; the realistic writer concentrates on the

developing individual instead. The reading of the realistic novel, upon completion, provides the reader with deeper insights into the character's plight.

Root (1977) proposed seven criteria by which one may identify popular novels of new realism. The criteria included (a) meeting generally accepted criteria for all other types of novels, (b) stressing honesty without being sensational, (c) presenting relevant cultural values, (d) expecting the reader to understand and to appreciate the intent of realistic adolescent novels, (e) treating topics and themes of interest to adolescents with care and objectivity, (f) using language and dialect to enhance characterization, and (g) demonstrating that resilience and persistence in problem solving provide hope for the future.

Mertz (1978), defining the new realism in yet another way, presented eight categories for the realistic novel comprised of various themes and topics considered unacceptable at earlier points in the genre's history. Themes included changes within the family, coping with death and dying, the understanding of ethnic and racial groups, and the recognition of male and female societal roles; topics involved pregnancy, physical maturation, birth, and drugs.

While these categories differ considerably from those traditionally associated with novels of adolescence prior to the 1970's, the works of new realism do uphold traditional, conservative values instead of disputing them. This design, especially for the adolescent searching for an identity and formulating a set of moral values, helps encourage the development of critical thinking skills necessary for survival in the adult world (Mertz, 1978).

Williams (1960) listed several major value orientations of our culture that also surface within the concerns of new realism in popular adolescent fiction. Included were the value of work, the necessity of achievement, the need for moral education, and the importance of humanitarian tendencies. Eager to please society and to sell their products, publishers, Mertz (1978) suggested, remain committed to these conventional values.

Fauvre (1979), in a doctoral dissertation dealing with the use of literature to instill societal values, investigated the specific humanitarian trait of empathy. Studying the responses of 64 boys and girls to two questions administered after having been read a series of stories, the author then interpreted, coded, and scored responses using an analysis of variance procedure. Results showed that students did, in fact, respond more empathetically if certain literary effects were present in the story. Both psychological and educational implications involving the use of literature for values development were noted.

Contributing further to the practical use of adolescent literature for fostering the development of values for the adolescent, Schwartz (1976) specified that the genre's unique contribution was its commitment to the truth. The use of the popular adolescent novel grounded in the new realism as a basis for debate and discussion among adolescents in an educational setting promotes values development.

Supporting the teaching of the basic human values within the school system, the author stated, "School is the only place where we can reasonably influence people while they are in a young formative stage" (Schwartz, 1976, p. 20). If professional school personnel succeed in this endeavor, the world will be a better place for all of us.

Also addressing the thematic content of realistic adolescent novels, Donelson (1977) spoke of the adolescent need for self-clarification. With the value system playing an integral role in self - clarification, the effective adolescent novel offers the adolescent a penetrating view of himself or herself; the result often is a more realistic self - appraisal.

Focusing on need fulfillment and the adolescent novel, Enqdahl (1975) reported that quality adolescent works provided a realistic and pertinent description of adolescence as a complex maturational process. Blackburn (1983) concurred and offered suggestions for using selected novels like Barrie's Peter Pan within the classroom to help expound upon adolescent maturation.

Matter (1982), concerned with identity clarification and the concept's importance to the theories of Erikson, Freud, and Piaget, also voiced support for realism in adolescent literature. Referring to the concepts of psychosocial and psychosexual development, the author related communication problems, inferiority complexes, and ineffective coping behaviors to adolescent egocentrism. It was then suggested that since little or no attention has been devoted to analyzing the adolescent novel's use of egocentrism as a primary tool in establishing realism, future research on the topic is needed.

Sutton (1983), however, reviewed V. C. Andrew's Flowers in the Attic and provided a commentary based upon adolescent preoccupation with sex. Taking adolescent sexual interests well beyond the egocentric, self - centered desire for self-gratification, the author abandoned the more traditional approach and considered the power of sex over the book's main characters, a brother and sister involved in an incestuous relationship.

Most attempts at realism, however, have tried to avoid the more controversial aspects of identity formation, self-clarification, and psychosocial or psychosexual development. Freeman and Jacobson (1981) researched language use in basal readers and adolescent novels and found basal readers relying more heavily upon formal language patterns than the adolescent novel did. Though an identifiable element of language formality was found to exist in the novels considered in the study, sufficient evidence of informality was also noted. This characteristic of novels of adolescence has positive implications for adolescents of various ethnic groups.

Eaglen (1979) warned of dangers inherent in inappropriate and inaccurate use of slang and vulgarity, both manifestations of informality in some novels of adolescence. While slang and vulgarity do add elements of realism, abuses of either through redundancy or inappropriateness lessen the works' credibility and, consequently, its effectiveness. A lesson in values clarification may be negated by the author's mistake.

Similarly, novels concentrating on adolescent problem-solving or coping behaviors must be carefully designed to ensure credibility. Marshall (1981) claimed that unbelievable conclusions of novels dealing with runaways posed a particular problem. The author, describing shortcomings in the genre, cited . . . "predictability in plot, stereotyping in characters and setting, patent implausability, and unveiled moralism" (Marshall, 1981, p. 58).

DeSalvo (1979), examining Brancato's novels of adversity and their impact upon adolescent coping strategies, indicated that a convincing effort must be made to reveal to adolescents their own capabilities for coping with storm and stress. This must occur, it was suggested, without directive or over - protective authorial intrusion.

Tartagni (1976) explained the term bibliotherapy, traced its application to the school setting, and suggested practical uses of the concept within the counseling process. Defining bibliotherapy as the . . . "dynamic interaction between the personality of the reader and literature - interaction that may be used for personality adjustment and growth" (Darling, 1957, p. 293) suggests its therapeutic value (Tartagni, 1976). Bibliotherapy, both preventative and problem - solving, promotes ; the healing process by fostering critical thinking. With the counselor functioning as a facilitator, the adolescent may come to recognize, understand, and accept himself/herself.

Additionally, Holbrook (1982) defined bibliotherapy in terms of an adolescent's coping with emotional stress associated with development. Referring to the eight developmental tasks set forth by Abrahamson, the author discussed applications of bibliotherapy with the concerns of one's physique, peer relations, sex roles, and personal values. Holbrook (1982) concluded that the practical usefulness of adolescent novels for this purpose often goes unrecognized.

Citing particular use of the genre for understanding and coping with handicaps, Stroud (1980) and Stroud (1981) considered the portrayal of the handicapped in the works and described books offering realistic and positive characterizations.

Fein and Ginsberg (1978) had earlier discussed the benefits of using young adult and intermediate novels, along with professional literature, to prepare children in regular classrooms for the mainstreaming of special education students into their classes. In yet another article, Stroud (1981) responded with the idea that the goal of using adolescent novels for this purpose is to change attitudes and to modify behaviors; books encouraging these changes are "realistic, objective, sensitive, believable, entertaining, and well - written" (Stroud, 1981, p. 52).

Considering the adolescent task of developing an appropriate gender identity, Lystad (1977) focused on the image of the adolescent in books for youth over the last two centuries. While the portrayal of adolescents has changed from one of a dutiful, acquiescent child to an exploring, developing young adult, sex role stereotyping, especially for females, has not (Coleman & Reed, 1981).

Stanek (1976) addressed the issue of sex role stereotyping in adolescent literature and noted that inaccurate portrayals are quite common. Stating the view more emphatically, the author commented:

> The junior novel, with a creaky start in the '30s as formula type literature, is growing. The development of female characters in this relatively young genre appears to be at a stage resembling an adolescent girl's experimentation with makeup: a bit heavy, applied rather thickly, not yet artistic but showing promise (Stanek, 1976, p. 46).

Showing similar concern for female sex role stereotyping and its effect upon the adolescent's developing gender identity, May (1980) authored a content analysis of the portrayal of nineteenth century females in Alcott's Little Women. Recognizing these female characters' differences from those in other more traditional novels from the same era, the author suggested that by freely setting personal goals, voicing opinions, and selecting roles, Alcott's females provided a basis for improved characterization of the female adolescent. Spaeth (1982), similarly, considered Wilder's Little House books and the presentation of frontier adolescent women in the nineteenth century.

Nelson (1975) voiced strong objections to the portraying of the female adolescent in adolescent fiction and suggested that the genre had not attempted to portray self - actualized, independent role models. Portraits, the author explained, too often revolve around personal matters or sexual concerns. Too many adolescent female characters submit to sex and become pregnant in a "woman - as - womb syndrome" (Nelson, 1975, p. 55).

Examining female characterization in books by Blume, Shapiro and Snyder (1982) found support for the already abundant body of criticism on the subject. Referring to unflattering female portrayal and to characterizations with minimal positive contribution to adolescent girls, the authors expressed concern about characterizations with unnecessary emotionalism and passivity.

Parrish (1983) reported that many feel that teen romances are especially guilty of depicting females primarily as objects of attraction for males or as competitors for masculine attention. The author balanced this negative view, however, with a positive focus on the romance novel's readability and appeal for teenagers.

Calling attention to male sex role stereotyping in adolescent literature, Kelty (1975) heightened the controversy by suggesting that conditioning males to aggressiveness and violence . . . "is far more dangerous than the relegation of the female to passive activity" (Kelty, 1975, p. 57). To infer that the world is entirely hostile and that violence is a necessary element of manhood, the author concluded, raises serious questions about adolescent literature's significance and its influence on the developing adolescent.

Grossberg (1977) summarized the viewpoints of many exploring the topic. The main consideration about adolescent novels is

. . . "women, like men, are socially and culturally prepared by reading for the roles society expects them to play" (Grossberg, 1977, p. 78).

In general, if school personnel, including teachers, administrators, coaches, counselors, nurses, and psychologists find innovative methods of incorporating adolescent novels within the system, many of the . . . "frustrations, animosities, and prejudices may be corrected or lessened" (Berger, 1978, p. 113).

Grixti (1982) suggested practical use of horror fiction as a part of emotional therapy for adolescents. Involving teachers in any subject area, Hamilton (1975) proposed human relations activities involving adolescent literature. Psychological counseling dealing with subjects like death and disability, topics popular currently among adolescents, was mentioned by Lary (1978). Group counseling procedures, formal or informal, may rely on adolescent fiction for assistance (Compton & Skelton, 1982).

Gallo (1981) stated that a concern for realism in adolescent fiction has helped the genre gain much needed acceptance. To continually hold its place of significance in a world flooded with literature, the adolescent novel must address the everchanging needs of society.

What does the future hold for the genre? What changes can be expected? Larocque (1981) forecasted that five specific areas will establish new trends for the future. These areas of possible development include (a) unstable economic circumstances, (b) technological growth and progress, (c) population changes in composition, (d) changing cultural beliefs and values, and (e) changes in official governing policy and strategy.

In summary, adolescent literature offers vase opportunities for application to educational settings. Efforts to legitimize the genre by making it more realistic have succeeded in winning approval from professional organizations, educators, and the general public. With its only recently improved status, popular adolescent novels have only begun to surface as valuable tools for assisting adolescents in their progression toward adulthood.

While the creative application of adolescent novels in educational settings depends, to a large degree, upon the professional, the genre's thematic and topical concerns provide irrefutable and invaluable assistance to the adolescent even without educational intervention.

Of particular importance are the following contributions of the genre to the area of adolescent psychology and to the adolescent himself/herself. Contributions include (a) providing a practical and interesting way of promoting the development of critical thinking skills involving problem - solving and coping strategies, (b) helping the adolescent recognize, understand, and accept himself/herself and others, (c) offering insights that lead to values clarification and encouraging experimentation rather than foreclosure, (d) focusing on rites of passage and initiatory stress factors facing adolescents in Western culture, and (e) helping the adolescent gradually emancipate himself/herself from unilateral parental control and accept responsibilities placed upon him/her.

As far as future research is concerned, the relatively recent development of the adolescent novel and of the related area of adolescent psychology means that many questions are yet to be answered. Questions of merit might include:

1. How do the thematic and topical concerns of adol scent novels relate to adolescent psychological theory?
2. What psychological theories can be traced most frequently in adolescent novels?
3. What do adolescents of different identity statuses find appealing or beneficial in novels of the genre?
4. How can popular adolescent novels become an integral part of the educational curriculum with resistance from traditionalists in the classroom who favor classic novels of adolescence over popular ones?
5. With more emphasis on reality and a commitment to improved plot, characterization, and narrative, how will the popular adolescent novel, as it becomes more classic in nature, remain different from the classics in its impact upon the adolescent?

Answers to questions like these will broaden the scope of the adolescent novel's appeal considerably. With a wider appeal and more general acceptance from professionals in the educational environment, adolescent novels may, in the future, make the adolescent transition from childhood to adulthood less difficult.

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